

Incident Based Automation, IBA, System
Business Process Modeling, Interview
Finance Section Chief
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Interview Notes by Craig Tanner, Senior Data Architect

NOTE: See interviewer questions at bottom based on interview write-up. Answer to be provided for finalization of interview notes.

As a Finance Section Chief , some roles and responsibilities include:

Question: What actions do you take prior to a incident?

Answer:

1. The Pre-order that Dispatch has for each of the teams is critical to the incident. Pre order includes items such as:
 - a. Potable Water
 - b. Caterer/Shower
 - c. Vehicles
 - d. Overhead, Etc.

It is necessary to make sure that most of what is needed is there on the incident by the time the Type I team arrives.

2. The Finance Section Chief participates with the team in planning the pre-order on a annual basis. The planning based on an evaluation of what worked and did not work the year before.

Question: When and how do you get notified?

Answer:

1. Notification to all incidents start with a call from Dispatch. Everything needed at an incident is placed on a Resource Order. .
2. Dispatch will also provide notification for travel arrangements as well.

Question: What are your primary activities at an incident?

Answer:

1. The Finance Section Chief is responsible for the tracking of all costs, such as crew costs, daily aviation costs, personnel and all equipment costs
2. The Finance Section Chief has oversight responsibilities for the Time Unit Leader, Cost Unit Leader, Procurement Unit Leader and Comp Claim.

Question: What do you do at the beginning of an Incident?

Answer:

1. Work with logistics and the Logistics Supply Unit Leader, to make adjustments to what has been pre-ordered and determine what still needs to be ordered for Finance.
2. Determines what has already been checked in at an incident and what is on order.
3. The Finance Section Chief's in-briefing participation is required.

Question: What the most important type of information for the Finance Section Chief at the in-briefing?

Answer:

1. Important to review and have an understanding of the business operating procedures
2. Gather contractual information from the jurisdictional agency
3. Begin working on the cost-share agreements if multi-jurisdictional
4. Where they will set-up the incident command post, ICP
5. Review the services and supply plan
6. Make contact with the Agency Administrator and/or IBA.

Question: What are the activities after the in-briefing?

Answer:

1. Assemble the Finance Section team together
2. Get setup in the facility, e.g., tent or trailer
3. Begin setting up land use agreements with land owners if needed.
4. Start gathering costs on hard-copy reports – looking for shift tickets for equipment time (equipment already on incident). Looking for resource time has already been posted.
5. Address work/rest ratio for initial attack resources.
6. Review WFSA for cost efficiencies and incident objectives.

Question: What do you do different if transitioning in instead of initial camp setup?

Answer:

1. If I-Suite is already in use, the I-Suite system will stopped to create a back-up disk for use by the incoming team. I-Suite will be restarted with the new server and operations will continue from that point with the new team.
2. Determine the status and location of all documentation.
3. Continue posting of time and equipment, including tracking costs.

Question: What are the steady state operations for the Finance Section Chief?

Answer:

1. Monitoring of all operations of the Finance Section
2. Monitoring of work/rest guidelines and length of assignment issues.
3. Looking for discrepancies in the finance section data

- a. Time sheet (CTR) discrepancies
- b. Unusual situations (demobing a person and bringing them back to the same incident)
- c. Poor data entry and coding (types of employees, agencies)
4. Ensure that all daily reports get sent out
 - a. Daily accrual report – Finance Section Chief should review this report before it gets sent out.
5. Ensuring that the Incident cost does not exceed the budget (WFSA contains a budget for the incident)
6. Daily planning meeting – Always provides a briefing on the costs of the incident to date, where they are against the WFSA, and projected costs. Typically make recommendations to the agency administrator regarding additional cost impacts that might be incurred to finish and close out the incident.
7. The Finance Section Chief is always looking for alternatives for mitigating costs. Report and advise on strategic and operational decisions to minimize costs.
8. Identify and report equipment not being utilized. Sequence the high cost equipment first into demob during close out.
9. Working on the Incident Action Plan, IAP (usually by 5:00 to 7:00 pm each evening)

Question: What actions occur for the Finance Section Chief in DEMOB, the Close Out phase of the incident?

Answer:

1. Close Out for the Finance Section is an ongoing process, preparation must be planned and executed on a daily basis.
2. Close Out includes pre- and post-inspections for equipment.
3. Providing a Finance Packet containing:
 - a. Resource Order
 - b. Copy of Contract
 - c. Pre-inspection
 - d. Shift Tickets
 - e. Invoice (may also include a Determination of Finding of any claims).
 - f. Post-Inspection (Or “No-Damage; No-Claim” statement)
 - g. Include accident investigation for claims and claim settlement.
 - h. Personnel Time
 - i. Comps/Claims
 - j. Daily cost summary and projections.

Recommendations:

1. Automate all payments direct to FSC
2. Standardize between the ways that different agencies do their business. This currently is a hindrance to full automation
3. Standardize accrual and payment procedures

4. Cannot afford to have any increased workload— for example, automation of submissions of hardcopy documents by fax during Close Out would require too many additional resources not available to the Finance Section Chief.

Questions:

1. When working with the Logistics Supply Unit Lead at the beginning of an incident, what's the source of information to identify what has already been checked in? Resource Orders Is a comparison made between the shipping manifest checked by Logistics Receiving and ROSS. Reply: "Yes."
2. Regarding the answer to the question "What the most important type of information for the Finance Section Chief at the in-briefing?" Reply: "Resources on site, resources ordered, need for a Cost Share Agreement, need for Land Use Agreements, a copy of Business Operating Guidelines, Service/Supply Plan, names/phone numbers for Adm Contacts and IBA, availability or need for a Buying Team, Cooperative and/or mutual aid agreements and contacts, potential claim areas, work/rest and length of assignment issues, etc." that "Important to review and have an understanding of the business operating procedures" – What are the primary sources of information? Reply: "There is a sample copy of operating guidelines in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, Toolkit section, pages 14-22"
3. The Finance Section Chief owns and is responsible for the cost-share agreement. What are the primary components for a cost-share agreement with state and local governments as compared to an agreement between the Forest Service and BLM, for example? Reply: "The Finance Section Chief helps the Agency Administrator facilitate the development of the Cost Share Agreement. The Agency Administrator is the responsible party. We do not have Cost Share Agreements between the FS and BLM. Cost Share Agreements are established with State and other non wildfire entities."
4. From whom and/or from where does the Finance Section Chief get the "Review the services and supply plan"? Reply: "We obtain a copy from the Incident Agency"